

The Profit of *Imprisonment.*

A PARADOX,

Written in French by *Odet de la
Noue*, Lord of *Teligni*, being
prisoner in the Castle of
Tournay.

Translated by IOSUAH
SILVESTER.



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To the worshipful his approued
frend maister Robert Nicolson
marchant, Iosuah Siluester
wistheth euer all true content.

TO you, youths Loadstar, London's ornament,
Frend to the Muses, and the well-inclinde,
Louing, and lowd of euery vertuous mind:
To you these tuneles accents I present,
Of humble stile, and uncouth argument,
Not to requight, but to record your kind
And gentle fauours, by the which you bind,
My best endeouours to acknowledgment.
Accept (I pray) this present in good part,
This simple pledge of my sincere affection,
Waigh not the worth, but waigh my willing hart
(Perfect good-will suplies all imperfection)
So may I one day wright your worthy name,
In better tunes vpon a bigger frame.



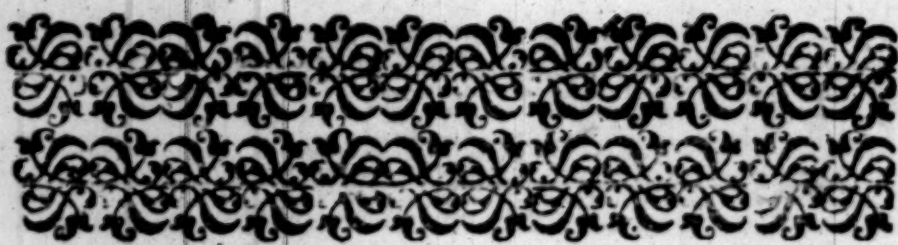




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A Sonnet of the author
to his booke

The bodie ouer-prone to pleasures and delights
Of soft, fragile, daintie flesh, and so selfe-ease addicted,
Abhorrs imprisonment as a base paine inflicted
To punish the defaults of most unhappie wights.
The soule as much surprisde with loue of heavenly sights
And longing to behold the place that appertains her
Doth loath the bodie, as a prison that detains her
From her high happines among the blessed sprights
Then, sith both bodie and soule their bondage neuer brooke
But soule and bodie both do loue their libertie:
Tell, tell me (o my muse) who will beleene our booke?
He that hath learned aights both these to mortefie,
And serue our savior Christ in body and in spirite
Who both from shal be freed by his owne only merite.





A Paradox

That aduersitie is more necessarie then prosperitie: and that of all afflictions, close prison is most pleasant and most profitable.

By the Lord of Telnigi,

How euer fondlie-false a uaine opinion bee,
If the vile vulgar once approue it, commonly
Most men esteeme it true: so great a credit brings
Consent of multitude, euen in absurdest things.

Nor any meane remains when it is once receiued,
To wrest it from the most offering minds deceiued.
Nay, who so shall but saie, they ought to alter it,
Hee headlong casts himselfe in daungers deepest pit.

For neuer nimble barke that on aduenture runns
Through those blewe bounding hills where horie *Neptun*
Was set vpon so sore with neuer-ceast assault (wunns)
Maintaind on euery side by winds and waters salt,
When raging most they raise their roughest tempest dreaded
As th' idiot multitude, that monster many-headed
Bestirrs it selfe with wrath, spight, furie, full of terror
Gainst what soeuer man that dares reprove her error.

Who vndertakes that taske, must make account at first
To take hote warrs in hand and beare awaie the worst.
Therefore a many workes, worthy the light, haue died
Before their birth, in breasts of fathers terrified
Not by rough deeds alone; but euen by foolish threats:
„ Yet onlie noise of words base cowards onlie beats.

Then feare who list for mee the common peoples crie,
And who so list be mute, if other minded: I
(Skorning the feeble force of such a vaine endeouour)
Will freely, spight of feare; say what I censure euer:
And though my present state permit mee not such scope,
Mine vnforbid en pen with error's pride shall cope.

A Paradox.

Close prison now adaies th'extreamest miserie
The world doth deeme, I deeme direct the contrarie:
And therewithall will proue that euen aduersities
Are to bee wished more then most prosperities:
And for imprisonment though that bee most lamented,
Of all the griefs wherewith men feare to be tormented,
Yet that's the state most stoar'd with pleasure and delight,
And the most gainfull too to any christian wight.
A *Paradox* no doubt more trew, then creditable,
The which my selfe sometimes haue also thought a fable,
While guilfull vanities, fed not, but fild my mind,
For strengthening sustenance, with vnsubstanciall wind.

I hated death to death, I also did detest
All sicknes and disease that might a man molest.
But most I did abhorre that base-esteemed state,
Which to subiections law our selues doth subiugate,
And our sweet life enthralls vnto an others will,
For as my fancie wisht I would haue walked still.
Death (thought I) soone hath don, & euerie greefe besides,
The more extreme it is the lesser time abides:
But now, besides that I esteemd the prisoners trouble
Much worse, mee thought the tyme his martirdome did dub-
So that to scape that skourge so irksome to my hart, (ble.
I could haue bin content to suffer any smart.

Lo by blind ignorance how iudgments are mist-led!
Now that full thirtie months I haue, experienced,
That so much-feared ill, 'tis now so vsd to mee
That I a prisoner liue much more content and free,
Then when as vnder cloake of a false freedome vaine,
I was base slave indeede to many a bitter paine.

But now I see my selfe mockt euery where almost
And feeble mee alone met by a mightie hoast
Of such as, as in this case do not conceaue as I,
But do esteeme them selues offended much thereby.

And therefore (father decre) this weake abortiue child,
For refuge runnes betwene th'armes of his granfire mild,
If you accept of it, my labour hath his hire,
For careles of the rest all that I heere desire,
Is only that your selfe as in a glasse may see
The image of th'estate of my captiuitie,
Where, though I nothing can auaille the common weale,

Yet

2

against libertie.

Yet I auaille my selfe at least some little deale.
Praising th'all powerfull Lord, that thus vouchsafes to poure,
Such fauours manifold vpon mee euery houre;
Wherof your selfe yer while so sweete sure prooffe haue tasted,
In cruell bitternes of bands that longer lasted,

Now I beseech his grace to blesse mine enterprise,
My hart and hand at once to gouerne in such wise,
That what, I wright, may nought displeasing him containe:
For voide of his sweet aide who works he works in vaine.

Within the wide-spredd space of these round Elements,
What soeuer is indewd with liuing soule and sence,
Seeks of it selfe selfe-good; this instinct naturall
Nature her selfe hath grauen in harts of creatures all,
And of all liuing things from largest to the least
Each one to flie his ill doth euermore his best.
Thereof it comes (we see) the wilde horse full of strength,
Tamelie to take the bit into his mouth at length,
And so by force we tame each most vntamed beast,
Which of it selfe, discreet, of evils takes the least:
And though that, that which seems to be his chiefe restraint
He often times despise, that's by a worse constraint,
As when the Lyon fierce, fearlesse pursues the shining
Of bright keen-pearcing blades, and's royall crest declining
Full of the valiant fyre, that courage woonts to lend,
Runs midst a million swords his whelpings to defend,
More fearing farre that they their libertie should lose,
Than on himsefe the smart of thousand wounding blowes.

But all things haue not now the selfe same goods and ils,
What helpeth one, the same another hurts and kills:
There's ods betweene the good that sauage beasts do like,
And that good (good indeed) which soul-wise man must seek:
When beasts haue store of food, and free from foe's annoy,
Smart-lesse, and sound, and safe, may as they list enjoy
Their fill of those delights, that most delight the sence:
That, that's the happinesse that fullie them contents.
But reasonable soules (as God hath made mankind)
Can with so wretched good not satisfie their mind.
But by how much the more their inlie sight excels
The brutish appetite of everie creature els,
So much more excellent the good for which they thirst,
Man of two parts is made, the body is the wurst,

The

A Paradox.

The heav'n-borne soule, the best, wherein mans blisse abides,
In bodie that of beasts, nought having els besides:
This bodie stands in need of many an accessorie,
To make it somewhat seeme: the soule recieves this glorie
That selfelie she subsists; and her abundant wealth.
(Vnlike the bodies store) is ever safe from stealth.

Our bodie tooke his birth of this terrestriall clod,
Our spirit, it was inspir'd of th'inlie breath of God;
And either of them still strives to his proper place,
This earth-born, stoopes to earth; that sties to heauen apace.
But as the fillie bird, whose wings are wrapt in lime,
Faine, but in vaine, attempts to flie full many a time:
So our faire soule surcharg'd with this foule robe of mudd,
Is too-too often held from mounting to her GOOD.
She striues, she strikes, sometimes she lifts her vp aloft,
But, as the worser part (we see) preuaileth oft,
This false fraile flesh of ours with pleasure's painted lure,
Straight makes her stoop again downe to the dust impure,

Happie who th'honour hath of such a victorie,
He crownes his conquering head with more true maiestie
Then if he had subdued those nations, by his might,
Which do discouer first *Aurora's* early light,
And those whom *Phæbus* sees from his *Meridian* mount,
Th'*Ansi-podes*, and all; more then the sand to count.
For small the honor is to bee acknowledgd King
And monarke of the world, ones selfe vn-maistering.

But eachman on his head this garland cannot set,
Nor is it giuen to all this victorie to get,
Only a verie few, gods deere belou'd elect
This happie goale haue got by vertew's lyue effect,
The rest, soone werie of this same so painfull warr,
Like well of heauen, but loue the earth before it farr:
Some, druncke with poisonie dreggs of worldly pleasures
Know where true good consists, but neuer do ensue't: (brute,
Some, do ensue the same, but with so faint a hart,
That at the first assault they do retire and start;
Some, more couragious, vow more then they bring to passe
(So much more easie 'tis to say, then do, alas)
And al through too much loue of this vain worlds aluremets
or too much idle feare of sufferings and endurements:
Meere vanities, whereto, the more men do incline

The

against libertie.

The farther of they are from their cheefe good deuine.

Therefore, so manie thinke themselues so miserable,
Therefore the aire is fild with out-cries lamentable,
Of such as do disdaigne the thing that better is,
To entertaine the worse, with forfeit of their blisse,
Therefore, we see those men that riches do possesse,
Afflicted still with care, and therefore, heauinesse
Abandons neuer those, that, fed with honnor's fill,
Fawne vp-on Potentats, for flitting fauour still;
And cause (God wot) they haue, to be at quiet neuer
Sith their felicitie is so vncertaine euer.

Neither are Kings them selues exempted from vexacion
How-euer soueraigne sway they beare in any nation,
For now they wish to win, anon feare losse no lesse,
Yea though for empire they did this wide world possesse,
Not one of them, with all, could full contented bee,
For how man more attaines, the more attempteth hee.
Who (therfore) couets most such soon-past goods vncertain
Shall n'er enioye the ioye of goods abiding-certain,
But who so seekes to build a true content to last,
On else-what must else-where his first foundation cast,
For all things here below are apt to alter euer;
Heer's nothing permanent, and therfore who soeuer
Trusts therto, trusteth to a broken staffe for stay;
For no earths vanitie can blesse a man for aye.
We must, to make vs blest, our firme assurance found
Els where then in this world, this chaunge-inthraled ground
We must propose our selues that perfect, perrish-les,
That true vnfaigned good, that good all danger-les
From th'uniust spoile of theeues, which neuer, neuer stands
In need of guard, to guard from soldiors pilling hands.

Now tis with spirituall hands and not with corporall
That we do apprehend these heauenly treasures all
Treasures so precious, that th'only hope to haue-them
In full fruition once, with him that frankly gaue-them,
Fills vs with euery ioy, our sorrows choakes and kills,
And makes vs feeble, amid our most tormenting ills,
A much more calme content, then those that euery day
On this fraile earth enioy their harts with euery way.

It's therfore in the spirite not in the flesh that we
Must seeke our soueraigne good and cheife felicitie

B

Th'one

A Paradox.

Th'one is not capable of any iniurie,
Th'other's thrall to the yoke of many a miserie
Th'one endles, euer lasts, th'other endures so little
That well nigh yer't be got tis gone it is so brittle.

For who is he that now in wealth aboundeth most,
Or he that in the Court Kings fauours best may boast,
Or he that's most with robes of dignitie bedight,
Or he that swimmes on seas of sensuall sweet delight,
But is in perrill still to proue the contrarie,
Poore, hated, honnor-les and full of miserie.

But one, that skorning all these rich proud pomps & plea-
About him euer bears like *Bias* all his treasures, (sures
Euen like to him can leaue his natiue cuntrye sackt,
Without sustaine of losse: and with a mind infract,
Euen vanquished bereaue the victors victories,

Who, though his land he win, cannot his hart surprise
Let exile, prisonment, and tortures great and small,
With their extreamest paines at-once assaile him all,
Let him be left alone among his mightie foes,
Poore; friendles, naked, sicke, (or if ought worse then those)
He doth not onely beare all this with patience,
But taketh euen delight in, such experience:
Regarding all these greifs, which men so much affright,
As babie-fearing buggs, and skar-crowes void of might:
He chuseth rather much such exercize as these,
Then mid the fleshdelights to rust in idle ease.

But verie fewe ther are that thus much will admit,
Nay few or non there are that easely credit it;
The most part taking-part with common-most conceat.
Yer they haue heard of this, sustain the rother streight:
Not seeing that themselues shunne and refuse as ill
What vnto other men for good they offer still

Not one of them will brooke his sonne in sloath to lurke
But moues, and stirrs him vp incessantly to worke:
Forbids him nothing more then sin-seed idlenes:
Nor any pleasure vaine permitts him to possesse,
(For well he knowes, that way to vertue doth not lead,
But thetherward who walkes a path of paine must tread)
If he offend in ought he chastens and reprocues him,
In somuch sharper sort by how much more he loues-him.

Thus handleth man the thing that most he holdeth deere

Yet

against libertie.

Yet thinks it strange himselfe should so be handled heer.
May we not rather thinke we are belou'd of God,
When as we feele the stripes of his iust-gentle rod?
And that, whom heere he letts liue as they list in pleasure,
Are such as least he loues, and holds not as his treasure?
For so, not of our slaues, but of our sonnes elect,
By sharp-sweet chastisements the manners we correct.

In verie deed God doth as doth a prudent Sire
Who little careth what may crosse his childs desire
But what may most auaille vnto his betterment
So knowing well that ease would make vs negligent,
He exerciseth vs, he stirres vs vp and presses,
And though we murmur much, yet neuer more he ceases,
He chastens, he afflicts; and those whom most he striketh
Are those whom most he loues, and whom he chiefly liketh.

No valiant men of war will murmur or mislike
For being plac'd to proue the formost push of of pike,
Nay rather would they there alreddy frunt the foe,
With losse of dearest blood their dauntlesse harts to show.
If an exploit aproach, or battle-day draw nie,
If ambush must bee laid, some stratagem to trie;
Or must they meet the foe in eger skirmish fell,
Or for the sleepeie hoast all night keepe sentinell:
From grudging at the paines, so farr of are they all,
That blest they coumpt themselues; therefore their Genetall
Imployes them often times, as most couragious;
And them approud, he plants in places dangerous,
But no man makes account of such as shun the charge,
Whose paine is not so little as their shame is large,

All of vs in this world resemble soldiors right,
From daie-breake of our birthe euen to our dying night,
This life it is a war, wherein the valiantest,
With hottest skirmishes are euer plied and preest:
Whom our grand Captain most setts-by he setts a-frunt,
The fore-ward, as most fit to beare the cheefest brunt:
Cares, exiles, prisonments, diseases, dollours, losses,
Maimes, tortures, torments, spoiles, contempts, dishonors,
Al these are hard exploits, & ful of bickerings bold, (crosses
Which he commits to those whom he doth deereft hold.
But leaueth those behind for whom he careth little,

A Paradox.

To stretch theselues at ease amid their honors brittle (surs
Their pomps, their dignities, their ioies, their gems, their tre
Their dainties, their delights, their pastimes, & their pleasures
Like coward groomes that guard the baggage & the stufte
While others meet the foe & show their valours prooffe.

But haue not these (say some) in these afflictions part?
No; but of punishment, they often fee the smart.
Afflicted those we count, whom chastnings tame, and turne,
The other punished, that at correction spurne.
The first still full of hope, reape profit by their rods,
The later desperate, through spight wax worse by ods.

Boy-stragglers of a camp, so should be punished then
Beeing naked forc't to fight with troupes of armed men,
Who cannot reape nor reach the pleasure, nor the meed
Nor th' honour incident for doing such a deed,
To such praise-winning place, braue soldiors gladly run,
Which as a dangerous place these faint-harts sadly shun.

What warrfour in the world, that had not rather trie
A million of extremes, yea rather euen to die,
Then with disgracefull spot to staine his honnor bright
In these corporeall warrs? Yet in the gholtly fight
Of glorie careles all, we shunn all labours paine,
To purchase with reproch a rest-nest idely-vaine:
Vertue is not atchiu'd, by spending of the yeere
In pleasures soft, sweet shades, downe beds and daintie chere,
Continuall trauell 'tis that makes vs there ariue
And so by trauell too vertue is kept a liue;
For soone all vertue vades without some excercise
But being stird, the more her vigour multiplies.

Besides, what man is he, that feeles some member rotten
Whereof hee fears to die, but causeth straight be gotten,
Some Surgeon that with saw, with cauter, or with knife,
May take that part awaie to saue his threatned life:
And suffers (though with smart) his very flesh and bones
To be both seard, and sawd, and cleane cut-of at-once.
But to recure the soule: the soule with sinne infected,
All wholesome remedies are hated and reiected.
With the Phisition kind th' impatient patient fretts,
Nor to come neere him once his helpfull hand he letts:
Wee are halfe putrified, through sinnes contagious spott,

And

against libertie

And without speedie helpe the rest must wholie rott.

Cut-of th'infected part, then are we sound and free,
Els all must perish needs, there is no remedie.

Most happie they, from whome in this fraile life, the Lord
(With smart of many paines,) cuts-of the paines abhord
Of th'euer-neuer death, wherein they lye and languish,
That heer haue had their ease and neuer tasted anguish.

But many, which as yet the aduerse part approoue,
Conceauē (if not confesse) that it doth more behooue
By faintles exercise faire vertue to maintaine
Then ouerwhelmd with vice, at rest to rust in vaine.
But yet the'xtremities of sufferings doth dismay-them,
The force where of they feare would easilie ouer-lay them,
They loue the exercise, the chastnings likewise like them
But yet they would haue God but seld & softly strike-them
Els are they prest to run, to ruine, with the deuills,
They are so sore affeard of false-supposed euills:

Most wretched is the man that for the feare of nisses,
All liuely breathing hopes of happie goodnes stifles,
Of nisses, sir (say they) seem all their bitter crosses
As nothing? nor their paines, nor lamentable losses,
That daily they indure? were not the wretches blest
If from their heauie load their shoulders were releast

Who is not happie sure in miserie and woe,
No doubt prosperitie can neuer make him so,
No more then he that's sick should find more ease and good
Vpon a golden bed, then on a bed of wood.

Man harbors in him selfe the euill that afflicts-him,
And his owne fault it is, if discontentment pricks-him:
And all these outward ills are wrongfully accused,
Which flesh and blood doth blame; for being rightly vsed
They all turne to our good: but who so takes offence
Thereby, hath by and by his iust rough recompence:
For neither in their power nor in their prooffe the same,
Are euills in effect but in conceipt and name.

Which when we lightlie waigh, the least of vs surmounts
Nor hurt they any one but him that ouer-counts thē. (them)

Neither ought that indeed for euill to be rated
Which may by accident be vnto good translated:
For ill is euer ill, and is contrarie euer

A paradox.

Directly vnto good, so that their natures neuer
Can be constrained to brooke each other, neither yet
Can thone be euer turnd to th'other opposit:
But plainly we perceauē that thear's no languor such,
But long continuance and custome lighten much.
Familiarizing so the fit that how so frett it
Euen in th'extremitie one may almost forget it
What better prooffe of this, then those poore gallie-slaues
Which (hauing been before such rogues and idle knaues)
As shunning seruices to labour wear so loth,
That they would starue and die rather then leaue their sloth,
But being vsd a while to tug the painfull oare,
Labour that earst they loathed they now desire the more:
Or those that are assaild with burning feuer-fit
Euen then when least of all they dread or doubt of it:
Which carefully complaine, and crie, and raue, and rage,
Frying in inward flames the which they cannot swage;
Yet if it wax not worse, the daintiest bodie makes it
In eight daies as a vse, and as a trifle takes it,
Or those that haue sometimes the painfull racke indured,
Who without chainge of paine being a while inured,
The paine that did constrainē them to bewaile and weepe,
Seemes them so easie then, they almost fall a-sleepe.

All are not euils then, that are surnamed so
Sith euill neuer can his nature mingle, no
Nor turne it into good; wheras we plainly see
On th'other side, that these are changed sodainly.
And were they ill indeed, sith they so little last
Wear't not a very shame to be so much agast?

But heer again (say they) th'ons nature neuer taketh
The others nature on, but still the stronger maketh
His fellow giue him place, and onlie beareth sway
Till that returne againe, driue it againe away.

Nay that can neuer be: for neuer perfect good
Can by his contrarie be bannisht (though withstood)
For good is euer good, and where so ere it goe
Euill doth euer strīue, but with too strong a foe.
There is no reason then, these, good, or ill to call,
That alter in this sort, and neuer rest at all:
Neither to blesse or blame them for the good or ill

That

against libertie

That euer in her selfe our soule concealeth still.

For if that from without our bale, or els our blisse
Arriued: euer more withall must follow this,
That alwaies, vnto all, selfe ill, selfe pain, would bring:
Selfe good, one selfe content: but 'tis a certaine thing,
They are not taken for their qualitie and kind,
But rather as th' affects of men are most inclind.

One, loosing but a crowne hath lost his pacience quight,
Another hauing lost fife hundred in a night,
Is neuer mou'd a iote, though (hauing lesse in store,
Then the other hath by ods) his losse might greue him more
One beeing banished doth nothing but lament,
Another, as at home, is there as well content.
And one in prison pent is vtterlie dismaide,
Another, as at home, liues there as well appaid.

Needs must we then confesse, that in our selues doth rest,
That which vnhappyeth vs, and that which makes vs blest:
In vs indeed the ill, which of our selues doth growe:
And in vs too the good, which from god's grace doth flowe
To whom it pleaseth him: true good that none can owe-yet,
Saue those on whom the Lord vouchsafeth to bestow-it:
And that the bitter smart of all the paines that wring-vs,
From nothing but our sin, receaueth strength to sting-vs.

Yea surely in our selues abides our miserie,
Our Grand-fire *Adam* left vs that for legacie,
When he enthralld him selfe vnto the law of sin;
Wherein his guiltie heires their Greef-full birth begin.

The Lord had giuen to him a Nature and a feature
Perfect indeed and blest aboue all other creature;
And of this Earthlie world had stablish't him as King
Subiecting to his rule the raines of euerie thing:
His spirit within it selfe no selfe-debates did nurse
Hauing no knowledge yet of better nor of worse:
His bodie euer blith and healthfull felt no war,
Of those fower qualities that now do euer iar,
Nor any poysonie plant nor any serpent fell,
Nor any noysome beast could hurt him any deale:
He might, without the tast of bitter death attaine,
Vnto the hauen of heauen, where all trew Ioyes doe raigne.
And had he not misdone he might haue well bequeathed,

The

A paradox.

The same inheritance to all that euer breathed,
How happie had he bin, if he had neuer eaten,
Th'unlawfull fatall frute that double death did threaten,
O that he neuer had preferd the serpent's flatter
Before th'eternall law of all the world's creator.

You shall be (said the fiend) like supreme deities,
This sweet frutes sugred iuice shall open both your eyes
Which now your tirant God enuying all your blisse
Blinds with a filmie vaile of blacke obscurities,
Least that you should become his equalls in degree
Knowing both good and ill as well as euer he.

Poore *Eue* beleues him straight, and Man beleues his wife
And biteth by and by the apple asking-life:
Whereof so soone as hee had tasted, he begins
(But all too-late alas) to see his curled sinnes.

His eyes indeed were ope, and then he had the skill
To know the difference between the good and ill
Then did he know how good, good was when he had lost-it
And euill too he knew (but ah too deerly cost-it)
Leauing himselfe (besides the sorrow of his losse)
Nothing but sad dispaire of succor in his crosse.

He found him selfe falne down from blisse-full state of peace
Into a ciuill war where discords neuer cease:
His soule reuolting soone became his bitter foe
But (as it oft befalls that worst do strongest grow)
She is not easde at all by th'inly striuing iarres
Which do annoye her more then th'irefull open warrs.
Wrath, hatred, enuie, feare, sorrow dispare and such:
And passions opposite to these, afflicte as much,
Distracting to an fro the Princeesse of his life,
In restles, mutinies and neuer-ceasing strife.
Then th'umor-brethren all, hott, cold, and wet, and drie
Falne out among themselves, augment his miserie.
So that by their debate within his flesh there seeded
A haruest of such weeds as neuer can be weeded.
All creatures that before as subiects did atend him
Now, mong themselves conspire by'al means to offend-him
In breese, Immortall borne, now mortall he became,
And bound his soule to bide hells euer-burning flame,
Leauing his wofull heires euen from their birth, s begining
heires

against libertie:

Heires of his heauie paine, as of his hainous finning,

So that in him the Lord condemned all mankind,
To beare the punishment to his foule sinne assign'd:
And none had ever scap't, had not the God of grace,
(Desiring more to saue, then to subvert his race)
Redeem'd vs by the death of his deare onely sonne,
And chosen vs in him before the world begunne,
Forgiuing vs the fault, and with the fault, the fine;
All saue this temporall death, of *Adams* sinne the signe.

Now in the horror of those ease-lesse, end-lesse paines,
It may be rightlie said that euill ever raignes:
That's euill's verie selfe, and not this seeming-woe,
Whereof the wanton world complaineth dayly so.

Liv'd we ten thousand yeares continuallie tormented
In all fell tortures straunge that ever were invented,
What's that compar'd to time, that never shall expire,
Amid th' infernall flames, whose least-afflicting fyre
Exceedeth all the paines, all mortall hearts can think?
Sure all that we endure, till *Leche* droppes we drink
Tis all but ease to that, or if it be a paine
Is in respect of that a verie trifle vaine.

But were't a great deale worse, why should we evil name,
That which we rather finde a medicine for the same?
Health, wealth, securitie, honour, and ease do make vs
Forget our God, and God for that doth soone forsake vs:
Whereas afflictions are the readie meanes to mooue vs
To seeke our health in him that doth so dearly loue-vs.

Tis true indeed (say some) that benefite they bring-vs,
But yet the smart thereof doth so extreamely wring-vs,
That th'euill which they feele that doe endure the same,
Makes them esteeme it iust to giue it that for name.

Mans nature, certainly (it cannot be denyed)
Is thrall to many throwes, while heer on earth we bide
In bodie and in soule: the troubled soule softaines
A thousand passions strong, the bodie thousand paines,
And that's the wretched state, the which yere-while I said,
Was iustlie due to vs, when *Adam* disobayd.

But he that's once new-borne in Iesus Christ by faith,
Who his assured hope in God sole settled hath,
Who doth beleeue that god giues essence vnto all,
And all sustaineth still, that nothing doth befall

C

But

A Paradox.

But by his sacred will, and that no strength that striveth
To stop his iust decrees, can stand. or euer thriueth.
Not onely doth accept all paines with patience,
The which he takes for due vnto his deepe offence:
Nor only is content, if such be gods good pleasure,
To feele a thousand fold a much more ample measure,
But euen delights therein, and void of any feare,
Expects th'extremitie of all assaults to beare.

Whether almightie god abate their woonted vigor,
Or (that his may not feele their crosses cruell rigor)
Do wholly arme them with new forces for the nonce,
To beare the bitter brunt: or whether both at-once.

And to approue this true; how many daylie drink
Of torments bitter cup, that neuer seeme to shrink?
Alas, what sharper smart? what more-afflicting paines?
What worser grieve than that, which ceaseleslie sustaines
He that by some mischaunce, or els by martiall thunder,
Vnhappily hath had some maine bone broke in sunder?
What torment feeleth not the sore-sicke deep-diseased?
One while with cruell fit of burning fever ceased:
Another while assailde with collicke and with stone,
Or with the cure-lesse Gout, whose rigour yeelds to none.
Or thousand other griefes, whose bitter-vexing strife,
Disturbs continuallie the quiet of our life?
Yet notwithstanding this, in all this painfull anguish,
(Though the most part repine, & plain, & mourn, & languish,
Murmuring against the Lord, with malcontented voice)
Some praise his clemencie, and in his rods reioyce.

How manie such (deare Saints) haue fel tormentors seen,
To die betweene their hands, through moody tyrants teen?
So little daunted at their martyrdome and slaughter,
That in th'extremitie they haue expressed laughter.

How many at the stake, nay, in the verie flame,
Haue sung with cheerful voice, th'almighties prais-ful name;

Yet were they all compact of Artirs and of vaines,
Of sinewes, bones, and flesh: and sensible of paines,
(By nature at the least) as much as anie other,
For being issued all from one selfe earthly mother,

What makes them then to find such extreame smart so sweet
What makes them patientlie those deadly pang to meet,

No

against libertie.

No doubt it is the Lord, who first of nothing made-vs,
Who with his liberall hand of goodnes still doth lade-vs
Some more, and other lesse: and neuer ceaseth space
From making vs to feele the fauours of his grace.

Accurst are they indeed whom hee doth all abandon
To doe their lust for law, and run their life at randon.
Accurst who neuer tast the sharp-sweet hand of God;
Accurst, ah, most accurst who neuer feele his rod.
Such men by nature borne the bond-slaues vnto sinne,
Through selfe-corruption end, worse then they did beginne:
For how thy longer liue, the more by their amisse,
They draw them neerer hell and farther of from blisse.
Such men within themselues their euill's spring containe
Their is no outward thing (as falsly they complaine)
Cause of their cureles ill: for good is euerie thing,
And good can, of it selfe, to no-man euill bring.

Now if they could aright these earthly pleasures prize
According to their wirth, they would not in such wise,
For lacke, or losse of those, so vaine and transitorie
Lament so bitterlie, nor be so sadlie-sorrie.
But ouer-louing still these outward things vnstable,
To rest in true content, an howre, they are not able,
No not a moment's time, their feare doth so assaile-them,
And if their feare fall true, that their *Good fortune* faile-them,
Then swell their sullen harts with sorrow till they burst
And then poore desperat soules they deeme themselues acc-
And so indeed they are, but yet they err in this, (urist:
In blaming other things, for their owne selfe-amisse,
Other indifferent things, that neither make, nor marre,
But to the good, bee good; to th'euill, euill are.

Is't not great folishnes, for any to complaine,
That somthing is not don, which doth him nought cōstrain?
Sith if he vse the same, soule-health it hurteth not,
Nor if hee doe not vse't it helpeth not a iot.

But needs must we complain, (say some) for we haue cause;
Then at your perrill bee't; for that which cheefly drawes
You therto, tis intruth your brutnesse in misdeeming
Things euill, that are good (for sence-contrarie seeming)
And whilst that in the darke of this foule errors mist,
Your drowfie spirits do droop, alas what maruell ist,

A Paradox.

If euill follow you, and if iniurious still
To others you impute your selfe-ingendered ill?

Happie are they to whom the Lord vouchsafeth sight
To see the louelie beames and life-infusing light,
Of his sweet sacred truth; whereby we may perceau
And iudge arightly, what to loue, and what to leaue.
Such men within their soules, their goods haue wholly platt
Such goods, as neuer fire can either burne or wast:
Nor any theefe can steale, nor pirate make his praie,
Nor vsurie consume, nor tirant take awaie;
Nor times all-gnawing tooth can fret awaie, nor finish,
Nor any accident of sad mischance deminish.
For it is built on God, a rocke that euer stands,
Not on the vanities of these inconstant sands
Which are more mutable then wind and more vnstable,
And day by day doe make so many miserable.

O to what sweet content, to what high ioyes aspires,
He that in God alone can limmit his desires!
He that in him alone his hopes can wholie rest,
He that for only end, waites for the wages blest
Wherewith he promiseth for euer sans respect
Of their selfe-meriting, to guerdon his elect.

What is it can bereaue the wealth of such a man?
What is it that disturb his perfect pleasures can?
What is it can supplant his honnors and degrees?
Sith all his treasures, his delights, his dignities
Are all laid vp in heauen: where it were all in vaine
For all the sonnes of earth to war with might and maine.

No doubt (will some man say) each christian doth aspire
After this bodies death to those deer treasures higher
That are reserud in heauen, whereof the sweet possession,
Feares not the violence of all the worlds oppression:
But whilest that here below this fraile flesh-burthen ties him,
But the bare hope he hath, which how can it suffice him
Against the sharpe assalts of passions infinite
Whose glad-sad crosse conflicts afflict him day and night?

Needs must I graunt indeed, that that same perfit ioye
We cannot perfitly vpon this earth enioye:
But that that hope alone doth not sufficiently,
Blesse his life where it liues, for my part I denie.

Some

against libertie.

Some do not feare we see, to spend their stocke and store,
To vndertake the taske of manie trauailes sore:
To hazard limmes and liues in seruice of some Lord,
Depending oft vpon his foole-fat-feeding word:
Or waiting els perhaps, without all other hold
Vntill it please himselfe his francknes to vnfold,
Not reaking all their paine they are so inly pleased,
With hoped benefite wherof they are not seized.

And shall th' assured hope of euer-blisses then
For which we haue the word, not of vain mortall men,
That teach their tongues to lie; but of the highest God
The God of truth, truth's selfe, where truth hath stil abode:
Shall that (I say) not serue to settle our faint harts,
Against (I will not say) like dangers and like smarts:
But gainst these pettie greifs that now and then do pain-vs
No more like those then heauen neer earth that doth sustain-
Ah, shall we then dispise all trouble and vexacion, (vs)
Supported by a prop of doubtfull expectation:
And while for earthly things we can endure this
Shall we not do as much for an immortall blisse?

Indeed not of our selues, for self-ly nought we can,
But God when pleaseth him doth giue this strength to man,
Whereby he standeth stout: euen like a mightie rocke
Amid the mounting waues when *Eole* doth vnlock
Sterne *Auster's* stormie gate, making the waters wrastle
And rush with wrathfull rage against the sturdie castle
Whilst it, for all the force of their fell furie showne
Is not so much as mooud, and much lesse ouerthrowne.

So fareth such a man: for if from high degree,
He soudainly do slide, to liue contemnedly
With the vile vulgar sort, that cannot make him watter,
For well he is assur'd that gods high holie fauour
Depends not on the pomp, nor vaine, proud state and port,
That for the grace of kings adorne the courtly sort.

If he be kept in bands, thrall to the tirannies
And extreame cruell lawes of ruthles enimies,
Both voide of helpe and hope, and of all likelihood
Of beeing euer freed from their hands thirsting-blood;
In spight of them he knowes that one daie he shall die,
And then he shall enioy an endles libertie.

A paradox.

If he be forc't to flie from his deare country-clime
In exile to expire the remnant of his time,
He doth suppose the world to be a cuntry common,
From whence no tirranie till death can banish no man.

If that he must forsake his parents and his kin,
And those whose amitie he most delighteth in,
He knowes that where he finds a man, he finds a kins-man
For all mankind is come from one selfe father sinnes-man.

If being spoild of wealth, and wanton pampering plentie
He find vpon his boord two dishes skant of twentie,
And to his back one coate to keepe the cold awaie
whereas he had before a new for euerie daie:

He learneth of Saint *Paul*, who bids vs be content,
With food and furniture to this life competent,
Sith nothing (as saith *Iob*) into this world we brought
Nor with vs when we die can we hence carrie ought.

If he be passing poore, and in exceeding lacke
Of euery needfull thing for belly and for backe,
He learneth of the Sonne, that God the Father heedeth,
To giue to euery one, in time, the thing he needeth:
And that the fowles of heauen, and cattle small and great,
Doe neither sowe nor reap, yet find they what to eate:
Yea that the *Lillies* faire which grow among the grasse
Do neither spin nor worke and yet their garments passe
For culler and for cost, for art and ornament,
The glorious *Salomon's* rich robes of Parliament.

If so, that he be sicke, or wounded in the arme,
In bodie, backe, or brest, or such like kind of harme:
If in extremitie of angrie pain and anguish
Enfeebled still by fitts, he bed-rid lye and languish:
If all the miseries that euer martird man
At once on euery side afflict him all they can:
The more that he endures, the more his comforts grow,
Sith so his wretchednes he sooner commes to know
That from worlds vanities he may himselfe aduaunce
Which hold al those frō heauen, that stil delight that daunce.
He feares not those at all that with their vtmost might,
Hauing the bodie slaine can do no farther spight:
But only him that with ten thousand deathes can kill,
The soule and bodie both for euer if he will:

He

against libertie

He knowes it is their lot that seeke to please their God
To be afflicted still with persecutions rod,
So that what euer crosse, how euer sharp assaile-him
His constant hart's content and confort cannot faile-him
But he must die (say you), alas can that dismay?
Where is the labourer that (hauing wrought all day
Amid the burning heat, with wearines opprest)
Complaines that night is come when he shall go to rest.
The Marchant that returnes from some far forrain lands,
Escaping dreadfull rocks and dangerous shelves and sands,
When as he sees his ship her home-hauen enter safe,
Will he repine at God, and as offended chafe
For being brought to soone home to his native soile,
Free from all perills sad that threaten saylor's spoile?
He knowes, frō thousand deaths that this one death doth lose
That in heauens euer-ioyes, he euer may repose-him: (him
That he must bring his barke into this creeke, before
In th'euer lasting land he can set foote a-shoare:
That he can neuer come to incorruption,
Vnles that first his flesh do feelee corruption:
So that all rapt with ioy, hauing his helpe so reddie,
This ship-wracke he escapes, as on a rocke most steddie.
But more perhaps then death the kind of death dismaieth,
Which serues him for a bridge that him to heauen cōuaieth.
Whether he end his daies by naturall disease:
Or in a boysterous storme do perish on the seas:
Or by the bloodie hands of armed foes be slaine:
Or by mischaunce a stone fall downe, and dash his braine:
Or by the murdring ball of new-found earthly thunder
By day or els by night his bones be pasht a-sunder
Or burned at a stake; or bitterly tormented,
By cruell slaughter-men, in tortures new-inuented.
Alas, alas, for that, much lesse then least he careth:
For as a man falne downe into a pit, he fareth,
Who if he may be drawne vp from the noison place
Where adders, toades, and snakes crawle ouer feet and face,
Respects not, whether that ye vse a filken skaine,
Hemp-rope, or chaine of gold, so he get vp againe:
Euen so, so he may come to his desired blisse
The manner and the meanes to him indifferent is,

A paradox.

As for the differing paine (if any him doe torture)

If it be violent, he knowes it is the shorter:

But be it n'er so long, long sure it cannot last

To vs, whose Post-like lyfe is all so quickly past.

Now such a man, in whom such firme contents doe hyue,
Who can denie to be the happieſt man alyue?

And who ſo impudent, that dar'eth now profeſſe,

That this worlds ſained ſweet (whose vnſainde bitterneſſe

Brings to this verie lyfe full many torments fell,

And after dingeth downe to th'endles paines of hell.)

Should be preferd before theſe ſeeming ſowres, that make vs

Taſte many true ſweet ſweets yer this dead lyfe forſake vs.

And after liſt vs vp to that ſame bleſſed ioy,

That evermore ſhall laſt, exempt from all annoy.

So few there will be found (as I ſuppoſe) ſo deeming,

As manie which (more ſeard with theſe ils falſly ſeeming:

Than inlie falne in loue with heauen-ioyes excellence)

Approouing this eſtate, flye't as the peſtilence.

And yet in this eſtate is found felicity,

(As farre ſooth as it may amid the vanitie

Of this fraile fading world, where ech thing hourly changes,

For neuer from it ſelfe true happineſſe eſtranges.

It neuer doth decay, it neuer doth decreaſe,

In ſpight of angrie warre it euer liues in peace.

Maulgre poore want, it hath ten thouſand kinds of wealth,

Amid infirmities it hath continuall health.

Inviſible round with woe, it doeth reioyce and ſing:

Depriv'd of dignities, it's greater than a king.

It ſits ſecure and ſafe, free from hart-pining feares,

For euer with it ſelfe it all deere treaſures beares.

Not needing any aide of men of armes to watch them,

Nor fearing fraud, nor force of any foe to catch them.

Whereas we daylie ſee ſo many men, whose mind

To tranſitory traſh of world wealth is inclinde,

In their aboundance beg, and in their plentie poore,

(For who hath had ſo much, that hath not wiſhed more?)

No treaſures can ſuffice the gulfe of their deſire,

Yea, make them Emperours, yet will they more aſpire.

Peace cannot pacifie the fell rebellious broyle

That in their troubled ſoule doth euer burne and boyle.

For

against libertie.

For euery short content of any false delight,
A thousand bitter throwes torment them day and night.
All their estate doth stand abroad in hands of strangers,
Therefore the more their wealth, the more their daily dangers
The more their miseries, because the more they need,
Much strength and many men vnto their hoords to heed:
Dreading with cause, least craft and cruelty, or either,
Bereau them of their blisse, and treasure both together.

Needs must we then confesse that in aduersitie,
There is more happinesse then in prosperitie,
Sith that the mind of man so soone it selfe betrayes,
Vnto the guilefull snares that worldly pleasure layes,
Which make vs at the last headlong to hell to runne:
All which aduersitie doth make vs safelie shunne.

But here it may be askt, if pleasure, state and store,
(Plunging vs in the pit of vices more and more)
Be subiect so to make vs more and more accurst,
Must we esteeme that greefe (which sence esteemeth wurst)
More fit to better vs, and bring vs vnto blisse,
Then those whose smarting sting is not so strong as this?
Sure, sith that in our selues our cause originall,
Of blisse, and bale we hyde, it matters not at all,
For still the faithfull man one and the same remaines,
Whether the greefe be great or little he sustaines:
Sith how so ere it be, he takes occasion thence,
To seeke in God alone, his comfort and defence.
But for because our soule, the while she doth consort
With this grosse fleshlie lump, cannot, but in some sort
Suffer as sensible, yea, oftentimes so far,
That her best functions all, lesse apt and able are
Than els at other times: I do suppose the prooffe
Of one, then other ill, auailles more in behoofe:

That this is so, we see, a sicke man oft to find
Such ioyfull quietnes, and comfort in his mind,
That he esteems himselfe the best content a-liue:
But yet the sharpe disease, which doth his health depriue,
Withholdeth in some sort his senses and his wit,
That freely other-where he cannot vse them fit.

And so it fares with him, that through resolved wel,
Endures the cruell straines of any torture fell.

D

Now

A Paradox.

Now for the bannishd man, the chaunging of his dwelling
Neuer disturbes his ioye. And he whose wealth excelling
Turnes in a trice to want, by whatsoeuer chaunce,
His courage neuer shrinks nor yet his countenance.

So that in their content, all foure are all a-like,
A-like reioycing all in their afflictions eeke:
A-like contemning all worl'd's pompous vanities,
But the two last, haue odds in their extremities
In that without impeach, they may applie their mind
To many goodly things, wherin great ioy they find.
(I meane when each distresse offends a man alone,
Not when he is assailde at once of euery one.)

Yet perril's quickly past, danger endureth not,
Exile so easie growes that it is soone forgot,
The greatest losse that is we mind not many hours,
For thousand accidents distract this soule of ours,
Which cannot in such sort the senses still restraine
But that they will goe feede on many obiects vaine
Whereby at vnawares she oftentimes surprisd,
Is ouer reacht by those, whose rigour she dispisd:
And so the pleasant tast she doth vntimely misse,
Wherewith affliction sweet doth season heare her blisse,
So that, some other state (wherein our soule, lesse fed
With sundrie obiects vaine, shalbe more settled)
May rightly be preferd to these which make her stay,
And stumble often-times, vnto her owne decay,
And therefore I sustaine, close prison to be best,
Of all afflictions that may a man molest.

Considering, all defects to other crosses common,
In this are seldome found, and almost, felt of no man.

For Prison is a place where God sequesters men,
Far from the vile prospect of vanities terren,
To make them thence with draw their harts and to confesse,
That in his grace alone consists their happines.
It is a learned scoole, where God himselfe reades cleerly
True wisdomes perfect rules, to those he loueth decrly.

There, th' understanding, (free, amid the many chaines,
That bind the bodie fast) finds out a thousand meanes,
To learne another daie to be more apt and able
According to our place for vses seruiceable,

To

against libertie.

To proffit publike-weale for euermore we ought,
In seeking selfe-gaine see that common good be sought,
Knowledge is only learned by long excercitation:
For which, what fitter meane then such a sequestration,
Where each-man vndisturbd, through dilligence may grow
According to the guifts that gracious heauens bestowe:
One in abilitie to rule a lawfull state,
The vertuous to aduaunce, and vicious to abate:
Another, from the Tombe to fetch Antiquitie:
Another to discern true truth from sophistrie,
Another by the feats of elder men at Armes,
To fram wise stratagems for wofull warrs allarmes,
(For souldiars oftentimes may more experience get
By reading, then they can where camp and camp is met)
And (breeflie to conclud) iome, grauely to aduise,
Some, bold to execute, as each mans calling lies:
But most of all, to search within the sacred writt,
The secret misteries to mans saluation fitt.

A world of vanities, that do distract vs heer
During our libertie; in durance, come not neer:
The wall that lets our leggs from walking out of doore
Bounding vs round about within a narrow floore,
Doth gard vs from the gall which Sathan spring of spight,
Mingles among the sweet of this vaine worlds delight.
If he be happier man that liueth free from foes
Then he whom angrie troopes of enimies inclose:
Much more the prisoner then of his high blisse may boast
For being so far of from such a hugie hoast
Of hatefull foes so fierce in mallice and in might,
Himselfe so fainte and weake, and so vnfit to fight:
For he, and we God wor in steed of standing to-it
(How-euer in a vain, we vaunt that we will do-it)
When't commeth to the brunt we cannot brooke the field
But either flie like hares, or els like cowards yeeld.

The sundrie obiects fond, which make vs soone forget
Each other chastisement, in this do neuer let
For turne we where we list and looke which waie we will
At all times to our sight one thing is offred still,
Whether on pauement, rooffe, or wall we cast our eye,
Alwaies of our estate an Image we discrie,

D 2

And

A Paradox.

And so it also fares with our newes-greedie eare,
One very sound resounds about vs euery where:
Where euer harken we, we heere of nought but foes,
Our keepers commonlie are not too kind (God knowes)
By the least noise that is continually they tell
In what estate we stand and in what house we dwell.
So that incessantlie our harts are lift on high:
Some times to praise the lord for his benignitie,
Who doth not punish vs after our foule offence,
Though by a thousand sinnes we daily him incense:
Some times to magnifie his admirable might
Which hath our feeble harts with such great force bedight
That we, in steed of grief, or grudging at the paines,
Of sharpest chastisements, whereof the world complaines,
Leauing this loathed Earth we mount the highest place
Where through true faith we tast his hunnie-sweeter grace:
Some times to giue him thanks for all the wealth exceeding
Which from his liberall hand we haue to helpe our needing:
And to be short, sans cease to meditate on all
The countles benefites that from his goodnes fall
Not suffering any hower to passe awaie for nought
Without exalting him in deed or word or thought.

Yet doth the world esteeme this, a most hard estate
And him that feeles the same, it counts vnfortunate,
But I would gladly see some other state wherein
With such commoditie, so much content is seen;
Wherein lesse hinderance and lesse incomberance lies,
To make men misse the path vnto perfections prise

Sure sir (will some man say) you set a good face on-it
One might at length conuert, commenting so vpon-it
The cruellst prison house into a mansion faire,
Where 'twere not hard to liue content and voide of care:
You take your prison for a practiue man of art,
But such as those God knowes you find the fewest part:
You faine him to be frend to solitude and quiet
But the most part are prone to reuell and to riot:
One must be free from noise that meanes to studdie well,
Whereof who can be sure in such a seruile hell?
Besides hee must haue bookes, and paper pen and inke,
All which in prisoners hands are seldom left, I thinke;

So

againſt libertie.

So that you do not faine your gaile ſo good and gainfull
As to find out the ſame is difficulte and painfull.

I anſwear in a word (if any ſo ſhall wrangle,)
I do not bound all bliſſe within ſo ſtraight an angle:
I ſay great happines and hart-reuiuing ioy
Followes th'afflicted ſort in euery ſharp anoy:
But that there is no croſſe that doth ſo much auaille,
To make vs fit to helpe our neighbour, as the gaile,
Wherein the God of grace at his good pleaſure giues,
Meanes to effect the ſame, vnto the leaſt that liues.

But be it ſo, in bands, that nothing learne we can,
Tis to be learnd inough, to be an honeſt man:
And this is th'onlie ſchole, wherin th'Arch-maiſter teacheth,
Himſelfe, by ſecret meanes, rules that the rudeſt reacheth
Th'aduife of ſuch a one more profit doth impart
Then of the wicked ſort with all their curious art.

Concerning ſolitude, although that commonly
Our nature be inclind vnto the contrarie;
There, the aſſiſtant grace of God wee cheefly find
Who changing of our place doth alſo change our minde.

For being free from noiſe and for obtaining tooles
To helpe our knowledge with, as in all other ſkooles:
God euer cares for thoſe that feare his name for loue.
And if that any ſuch, ſuch inconuenience proue
If any money need, or els through ample diſtance
Be deſtitute of friends, he getts them for aſſiſtance
The fauour of their foes, whoſe harts he handles ſo
(Howeuer they intend his childrens ouerthrow)
That his, of what they need haue euermore inough,
According as he knowes to be to their behoofe.

Now ſay that we conſent (ſay ſome) that this is true:
But what if ſomewhat worſe then all this wuſt enſue?
What if he be enforc't his countrey to forſake?
What if continuall fits his ſickly bodie ſhake?
What if he loſe at once his wealth and reputation?
Repleat on auery ſide with euery ſharp vexacion?
Can hee ſtill kepe his ioue, and can he ſtill retaine
Such meanes to profit ſtill, for all this greef and paine?

Concerning his content, it's alwaies all a-like,
Whether that euery greef particularly ſtrike,

A paradox.

Or whether all at once he feele their vtmost anger,
And if he be surprisd with so extreme a languor
That (as I said before) the spirit it inforce
Througħ suffering of the smart that doth afflict the corps,
To leaue his offices, so that he cannot wright
Nor read nor meditate nor studie, nor indight.
It is so quickly past, that in comparison,
regarding so great good, tis not to thinke vpon.
For, by a mightie greefe, our life is quickly ended,
Or els by remedie it selfe is soone amended:
And if it be but mean, then is it borne the better .
And so vnto the soule it is not any letter.
Besides, we must conceaue, our spirit (as opprest
With fainting wearines,) sometimes desireth rest,
To gather strength again, during which needfull pause
We are not to be blamd, sith need the same doth cause:
So that the time that's lost while such sharp pangs do paine
May be supposd a time of taking breath againe.

In prison (to conclude) a man at once may trie
All manner of extreames of earthlie miserie:
In which respect perhaps the worse some deeme of it,
Beeing as, tweare the but that all men striue to hit,
But I esteeme the same the perfecter for that:
For if one crosse alone can make vs eleuate
Our groueling earth-desires from cogitations base,
To haue recourse to God, and to implore his grace,
Seeking in him alone our perfect ioye and blisse:
Much more shall many greefs at once accomplish this.
For many can doe more then one (without respect)
And still, the greater cause, the greater the effect.

Indeed (say other some) these reasons haue some reason
But then whence commes it that so many men in prison
With hundred thousand paines, pincht and oppressed sore,
In steed of bettering thear, wax wurser then before,
In steed of sweet content, do still complaine and crie,
In steed of learning more, lose former industrie?
Though (in apparance great) your sayings seeme but iust
Yet plaine experience (sure) we thinke is best to trust.

That hidden vertue rare that so great good atchiues,
Lies in the prisoners hart not in his heauie giues,

The

againſt ſilbertie?

The good grow better there, the bad become the worſe
For by their ſinne they turne Gods bleſſing into curſe.
And that's the cauſe the moſt are malcontent and ſad
Sith euermore the good are fewer then the bad.

But wherefore doth not God to all vouchſafe this grace?
Proud earth-wormes, pawle we there: let's feare before his
Admiring humblie all his holie iudgments high (face,
Exceeding all too farr our weake capacitie.
The potters veſſell vile, doth vs our leſſon ſhow
Which argues not with him why he hath made it ſo:
Much leſſe may we contend, but rather reſt content
With that which God hath giuen. He is omnipotent,
All gracious, and all good, moſt iuſt, and perfit wiſe:
On ſome, he poures a ſea of his benignities,
On ſome, a ſhallow brooke, on other ſome, a flood.
Giuing to ſome, a ſmale, to ſome a greater good:
As, from eternitie hath pleaſd th' eternall Spirit
To loue men more or leſſe, without reſpect of merrit.

For my part ſhould I liue ten *Nefor's* yeers to paſſe,
Had I a hundred tongues more ſmooth then *Tully's* was,
Had I a voice of ſteele, and had I brazen ſides,
And learning more then all the *Helyconian* guides;
Yet were I all too-weake to tell the many graces
That in ten thouſand ſorts, and in ten thouſand places,
Ten hundred thouſand times he hath vouchſafed mee
Not for my merrits ſake but for his mercie free.
But yet mong all the goods that of his liberall bountie
I haue receau'd ſo oft, non to compare accoumpt-I
With this cloſe priſonment, wherein he doth with-draw-me
Far from the wanton world, and to himſelfe doth draw-me

I poaſted on a pace to ruine and perdition
When by this ſharp-sweet pil, my cunning kind Phificion
Did purge (maugre my will) the poiſonie humor fell
Wherwith my ſin-sick hart alreadie gan to ſwell.
I lookt for nothing leſſe then for theſe miſeries
And paines that I haue prou'd, the world's vaine vanities
Had ſo ſeduce't my ſoule, with baits of ſugred bane,
That it was death to me from pleaſure to be tane:
But, (croſſing my requeſt) God for my profit, gaue
Me quight the contrarie to that which I did craue.

So

A paradox.

So that, my body barring from a freedome small,
He set my soule at large, which vnto sinne was thrall.
Wounding with musket shot my feeble arme, he cured
The festring sores of sinne, the which my soule endured:
Tripping me from the top of some meane dignitie,
Which drew me vp to climbe the mount of vanitie,
He raise me from the depth of vices darksome cell,
The which incessantly did ding me downe to hel:
Easing me (to conclude) of all the grieve and care,
wherewith these false delights for euer sauced are.
He made me find and feele amid my most annoyes,
A thousand true contents, and thousand perfect ioyes.

But some perhaps amaz'd, wil muse what kinde of pleasure
Here I can take, and how I passe my time and leasure:
For in soule idlenesse to spend so large a time,
It cannot be denyed to be a grieuous cryme.

First, in the morning, when the spirit is fresh and fit,
I sucke the honney sweet from soorth the sacred writ,
Wherin by faith we taste that true celestiaall bread,
Whence our immortall soules are euer only fed:
Then search I out the sawes of other sage diuines,
(The best here to be had) among whose humaine lines,
Supported by the grace of Gods especiall power,
I leaue the thorne behind, and plucke the healthsome flower.
Sometimes I doe admire, in books of heathen men,
Graue sayings sauoring more a sacred Christian pen,
Than manie of our age, whose bold vnlearned pride,
Thinking to honour God, hath errd on euery side:
Sometimes, when I obserue in euery ancient storie,
Such vertuous presidents, trimme patternes of true glory:
I wofully bewaile our wretched wicked daies,
where vertue is despisde, and vice hath all the praise.
Oft I lament to see so many noble wits,
(Neglecting Gods high praise, that best their learning fits)
To sing of nought but lyes, and loves & wanton theames,
False sooth-sinne flatteries, and idle Fairie dreames,
Then turning towards those, that fild with holier flame,
For onely subiect choose th'Eternals sacred name:
These chiefly I admire, whose honourable browes
Disdayne the fayned crowne of fading *Lurel* boughs,

Then

against libertie.

Then full-gorg'd with the sweets of such a daintie feast
(Prickt forward with desire to imitate the best)
Oft times I exerceise this arte-les muse of mine
To sing in holie verse some argument deuine.
One while to praise my God for all receaued good:
An other while to beg, that in his deere sonnes blood
My blacke finnes he will wash, and that he will not waigh
At his high iustice beame, how I haue gon a-stray.
Somtimes, these wretched times to pittie and deplore
Wherein the wicked ones do flourish more and more,
Somtimes to waile the state of sad distressed *Sion*
Imploring to her aide the Tribe of *Judah's* Lion.
If any other theame at any time I take,
Yet neuer doth my verse the setled bounds forsake
That veritie prescribes, nor now no more disguise
The vgly face of sinne with maske of painted lies.
And though that heertofore, I also in my time
Haue writ loues vanities, in wanton idle rime:
Twas as a whet-stone that whereon I whet my stile,
Yer it weare abely-apt ought grauer to compile:
Yet I repent thereof: for wee must neuer tend
To bring by euill meanes a good intent to end.
When as my wearie spirits some relaxacion aske,
To recreate the same, I take some other taske,
One while vpon the Lute, my nimble ioints I plie,
Then on the Virginalls, to whose sweet harmonie
Marrying my simple voice in solemne tunes I sing
Some psalme or holy song, vnto the heauenly King.
So that the idlest hower of all the time that flies
So fast, is neuer free from some good exerceise.
Wherein I ioie as much, as euer I haue donne,
In the most choice delights found vnderneath the sunne.
But you can neuer walke nor go to take the aire
Nor once looke out of doore, be weather nere so faire,
But there in solitud you leade your life alone
Bard from the fellowship of almost euerie one,
Which doubtles at the last must greeue you needs I thinke.
A man that neuer thirsts hath neuer need of drinke
So though I be bereft these other things you speake-of
I misse nor mind them not, as things I neuer reake-of.

E

For

A Paradox.

For I haue scould my hart since my captiuitie,
To wish for nothing els, but what is graunted mee
And what is graunted me, contents me passing well.
In each condition doth some contentment dwell:
But men of differing states haue difference in delights,
What pleateth common eyes, that irketh princes sights,
What rathelings do delight that sober men dispise,
What fooles take pleasure in, doth but offend the wise,
What prosperous people loath, afflicted folke will loue,
And what the free abhorr that prisoners will approue.
But all haue equally indifferent power to make
Them equally content, that can them rightly take :
For who so presently, himselfe can rightly beare,
Hath neither passed ill, nor future ill to feare:
Th'one, which is now no more, ought now no more affray-vs
Th'other, which is not yet, as little can dismay-vs
For what no essence hath, that also hath no might,
And that which hath power, can do a man no spight.
Besids, sith that our life is but a pilgrimage,
Through which we dalie passe to th' heavenly heritage:
Although it seeme to thee that these my bands do let-mee
Yet hast I to the goale the which my God hath set-me
As fast as thou that runst thy selfe so out of breath
In poasting night and day, by dales and hills and heath.
If thou haue open feelds, and I be prisoner
T'importeth me no more, then to the mariner,
Whether he go to sea shipt in some spacious arke
Or els at lesser scope aboard some lesser barke.
Nay, heer the least is best, sith this vast ocean wide
Whereon we daily saile a thousand rocks doth hide
Gainst which the greater ships are cast awaye full oft
While small boats, for the most, float ouer safe aloft.
Then may I well conclude with reason and assurance
That thear's no better state then to be kept in durance,
A sweeter kind of life I neuer prou'd then thear:
Nor was I euer toucht with lesser greefe and care:
If that I care at all it is for others cause
And for the miseries this times corruption draws:
But being well assur'd that nothing here betideth
Against Gods ordinance and will that all things guideth

And

10
against libertie.

And knowing him to be good, iust and most of might
I gladlie yeeld my selfe to th' order hee hath pight.
For he it is, that now makes me accept so well
And like of this estate which others hate as hell,
He t'is that heretofore vouchsafed me like releefe
When as I was opprest with a more greuous greefe:
He t'is from whom I hope in time too-come no lesse
Although a hundred fold were dubbled my distresse.
Yea hee it is that makes me profit euery day,
And also so content in this estate to stay,
That of my libertie I am not now so faine
To thinke by libertie a happier life to gaine
For I were well content no more from hence to go,
If I might profit most my frends and cuntrie so.
Now here I humblie praie (expecting such an end)
The Lord still towards me his fauour to extend,
And that he will vouchsafe still to allot like grace,
To all that for like cause are handled in like case.

FINIS.

